

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3812

Statement of U.S. Rep. Jack Murtha on Parks Township Clean Up

May 8, 2002 -- First let me thank the Army Corps of Engineers for scheduling tonight's meeting to give the community an opportunity to review the plans regarding the Parks Township Shallow Land Fill Project. I've asked them to be completely open about the process and make every effort to keep the community informed each step of the way, and they have assured me they will do this.

The clean-up of the Parks Shallow Land Fill has been a long time in coming -- too long in my estimation. As you know, I first brought in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to assess the landfill, but many of us were not happy with the direction of the NRC. That's why I worked to amend legislation and put the Army Corps of Engineers in charge. I have made several requests of the Army Corps.

First, I have asked them to be completely open about the process and to make every effort to keep the community informed each step of the way, and they have assured me they will do this.

Second, I have asked them to move forward as quickly as they possibly can to complete this project, because I know that the community has been living with fears and concerns for many years already, and we're all anxious to see the hazards removed.

Third, I have asked them to give full consideration to the concerns of the community. I know that many of you want to eliminate the risk of future, ongoing exposure.

And fourth, I have asked them to remove the materials rather than just seal the land fill. I agree with the concerns that many of you have expressed to me: that sooner or later, the hazardous substances will find a way out into our environment through the old mine workings. Let's clean it up now while we have the momentum and not end up with a crisis later and no money to fix it.

The Corps of Engineers has agreed to be open, to consider the community concerns, and to move forward as fast as possible. They cannot, at this time, jump to the conclusion that the materials will be removed because they are required under the law to consider other options.

But I want to assure the community that I will do everything I can to see to it that the Corps lives up to what they've said they'll do.

I'll do everything I can to see to it that they reach what I believe is the only logical conclusion -- that the materials must be removed and not just sealed in place.

And I'll do everything I can to see to it that this project receives the additional funding that it will need over the next several years.